

## New Web site Launched to Educate Consumers on Food Safety

A new Web site to educate consumers about proper food safety and the inspection history of more than 10,000 Kansas food service establishments was recently introduced by The Bureau of Consumer Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

The bureau is charged with licensing and inspecting food service establishments statewide. These food service establishments regulated under the Kansas Food Code include restaurants, school meal sites and kitchens, senior meal sites and kitchens, special events, caterers, and mobile food units. The Kansas Food Code is adopted from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Model Code and is based on nationally recognized scientific standards for food safety intended to minimize the hazards that can lead to foodborne illness or injury, thus ensuring safe food and optimal levels of sanitation in food service establishments.

The screenshot shows the official website of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). The header includes the department's name, contact information for Kathleen Sebelius, Governor, and Frederick L. Stensby, Secretary, along with the address: Curtis House Office Building, 1600 SW Jackson Avenue, KS, 66612. A navigation menu lists various services like Food Safety, Disease Outbreaks, Contact Us, Inspected Links, and FAQs. The main content area is titled 'Food Safety and Consumer Protection' and features a search interface for food service establishments. It includes a sidebar with links to 'Learn More About Food Safety', 'Foodborne Illness (FBI)', 'Fact Sheets', 'FDA Public Health Resources (LHFI)', 'Focus on Food Safety', 'Did You Know?', 'Restaurants and Information', 'Inspection Search', 'Learn More About Inspections', 'Report Concerns', 'Bioscience Information', 'Licensing Process', 'Application Forms & Fees (LHFI)', and 'Kansas Food Code (LHFI)'. The search section contains fields for 'Establishment Name', 'City', and 'County', with a 'SEARCH' button and a 'CLEAR' button. A small cartoon character is also visible next to the search fields.

The Web site, [www.ksfoodsafety.org](http://www.ksfoodsafety.org), is updated weekly with inspection results. Inspections are unannounced and only represent the conditions found in the food service establishment at the time of the inspection. Inspections concentrate on critical food safety processes, procedures and sanitation essential to the control or elimination of food safety risks to the public. Violations noted at the time of the inspection are corrected if possible. Re-inspections occur if corrections are not achieved during the initial inspection.



There are two categories of violations: critical and non-critical. Critical violations are items that are more likely to contribute to a foodborne illness, food contamination or environmental health hazard. Examples of critical violations may include: food from unsafe or unapproved sources, inadequate cooking temperatures, improper holding temperatures, and poor personal hygiene. Non-critical violations include items relating to general sanitation and best retail practices. Examples of non-critical violations may include: dirty floors, inadequate lighting in food preparation or storage areas and lack of effective hair restraints.

- Continued -

There are several reasons that an inspection may be initiated. Looking at a series of inspections over time gives a more accurate picture of the food service establishment's commitment to food safety and sanitation.

Food safety interventions, consultations, and educational tools are employed to promote increased food safety within the establishment. In the end, food safety is an ongoing cooperative effort that involves the management of the establishment, food workers, regulators and consumers.

Important things to remember when viewing inspections:

- Inspections are unannounced.
- Inspections represent a snapshot in time.
- Violations are required to be corrected at the time of the inspection.
- Food safety education and interventions are tools to increase food safety controls.

Food safety is a cooperative effort.